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City and County of San Francisco

Results of the 1997 Citizen Survey

Edward Harrington, Controller

Prepared by Anne M. Jenkins, with assistance from the
Public Research Institute, San Francisco State University

April 1997

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Results of the 1997 Citizen Survey

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Detail of responses by geographic area is available upon request.

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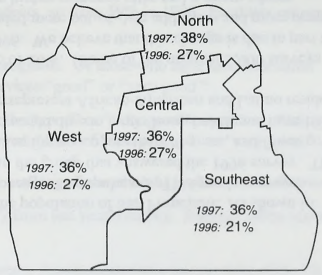
Executive Summary

The 1997 Citizen Survey is the second annual survey conducted by the Controller's office for the City and County of San Francisco. This year's survey found that:

- Respondents are **more satisfied with City services in general**, and satisfaction is more consistent throughout the City. The map at right shows the proportion of "good" or "very good" ratings, by section of the City.
- This year's survey respondents feel **safer** in their neighborhoods, parks and downtown, although they report experiences of crime similar to the 1996 respondents.
- Ratings of **parks** and **libraries** have improved and continue to be favorable.
- People continue to approve of **Muni**'s routes and fares, and are less dissatisfied with safety, cleanliness and driver courtesy, but rate timeliness even worse than last year.
- 85% of respondents have **health insurance**.
- Many of the 1996 gaps in service ratings between residents of the **Southeast** section of the City and others are not distinguishable in 1997.



Percentage of Respondents Rating Local Government's Overall Performance Good or Very Good

Purpose of the Survey

These annual surveys are part of an ongoing effort to measure and improve the performance of City government. One of the most direct ways to measure the *outcomes* of the City's efforts--that is, the extent to which services are having their desired results--is to ask the users of those services.

A primary purpose of last year's survey was to set a baseline. In 1997, we look at many of the same services, and compare ratings with last year. We also added a new area of inquiry, health insurance status. In future years, we will continue to measure changes in citizen satisfaction.

The Survey Sample

We have been working to generate a sample of survey respondents who represent the population of San Francisco. As shown in Appendix A, the number of respondents in each zip code is approximately proportional to the population. This year's survey respondents represent San Franciscans, as described by the 1990 Census, better than the group that answered the 1996 survey. The 1997 sample includes more renters, people under 30, and people who have lived in San Francisco less than 20 years, and fewer college graduates, than in 1996. Still, the survey respondents on average are older, more educated, live in larger households, and have been in San Francisco longer than the population as a whole. The survey continues to underrepresent African-American and Latino residents.

The 1997 survey received 1,197 responses out of 4,287 surveys, for a response rate of 28%. (Some of the original 5,000 surveys mailed were undeliverable.) This is a smaller response than the 40% received in 1996. We believe that this change is due in part to differences in the sample list, which although more representative of the City, included more out-of-date addresses and more people who were disinclined to respond. In future years, we will continue to try to achieve higher response rates and a group whose demographic qualities match the City's population.

Because the composition of the sample has changed, we cannot necessarily conclude that a change in the rating of a service reflects an actual change in quality; it may result from a different group of people responding. However, we do find that responses to many questions are quite similar from year to year, suggesting that the two groups of San Franciscans do not differ dramatically in their use and personal experiences with City services.

Major Findings

Opinions of the general performance of City government cluster around "fair" (52% of all responses), but have improved.

- 37% of respondents choose "good" or "very good" to describe general city performance in 1997, while last year, only 25% chose these favorable ratings.

Libraries, parks and recreational programs continue to receive positive ratings.

- Park grounds are rated "good" or "very good" by 67% of the survey respondents, up from 59% in 1996. Facilities ratings center around "fair" for the second year.
- About half of respondents indicate that they have not used City recreation programs. Of those who have used recreation programs, about half rate the convenience, cost and quality of recreation services "good" or "very good."
- Opinions of library staff continue to be favorable, with 72% of responses in the "good" or "very good" categories. Ratings of collections, hours, computer resources and children's programs have improved; 60% to 65% are "good" or "very good."

On average, people feel safe to neutral walking alone in the daytime, but unsafe walking alone at night in parks or downtown.

- In each situation, feelings of safety walking alone have improved moderately from last year's survey. Average safety scores are about 6% more favorable for both daytime and nighttime.
- Southeast residents still feel less safe in their neighborhoods, both day and night, than residents of other sections of the City.
- Women, older people, and nonwhite respondents feel less safe than men, younger people and white respondents, respectively.

Approximately half of crime victims did not report the incident to the police, for both violent and nonviolent crimes.

- The proportions of San Franciscans who experienced violent (7%) or nonviolent (25%) crime in the year before the survey have not changed since 1996, nor has the proportion who reported crimes to the police.
- Southeast residents indicate more experience of **violent crime** than residents of the Western part of the City. (Comparisons with the Central and Northern sections of the City did not yield statistically significant differences.)

Major Findings (continued)

Survey respondents express satisfaction with Muni's route structure and acceptance of fare levels. However, they are still less than satisfied with reliability, safety and cleanliness.

- Ratings of timeliness/reliability have declined from 1996, with 47% choosing "poor" or "very poor," up from 42% last year. Among frequent Muni riders, about 54% rate timeliness/reliability "poor" or "very poor."
- About two-thirds of respondents rate convenience of routes as "good" or "very good," which is consistent with the 1996 findings.
- Ratings of safety and courtesy have improved to an average of "fair"; cleanliness ratings have also improved, but remain unsatisfactory, with 46% of respondents choosing "poor" or "very poor."

Health insurance

- 85% of respondents have health insurance.
- Of those who do not have insurance, the most common reason given is that it is too expensive (62%). In addition, many of those who gave an "other" reason included expense in their explanations.
- 17% of respondents had visited a City clinic in the past twelve months.

Summary of Responses

Parks and Recreation

1. In general, how do you rate the quality of the City's parks in the following categories?

	VERY GOOD 1	GOOD 2	FAIR 3	POOR 4	VERY POOR 5	NUMBER OF RESPONSES*	MEAN SCORE**
♦ grounds (landscaping, plantings)	17%	50%	28%	4%	1%	1099	2.22
♦ facilities (cleanliness, maintenance)	7%	24%	42%	20%	7%	1054	2.96

2. In the past **year**, how often did you:

	AT LEAST ONCE/WEEK	AT LEAST ONCE/MONTH	SEVERAL TIMES/YEAR	ONCE OR TWICE/YEAR	NEVER	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
♦ visit Golden Gate Park?	14%	19%	34%	23%	10%	1162
♦ visit other City parks?	12%	17%	29%	28%	15%	1112

Many of the patterns of responses are similar to those found in last year's survey. Except where noted, this year's findings do not differ significantly from 1996.

- Ratings of the quality of park **grounds** are largely favorable **(67% good** or **very good)**, and have improved from 1996 (59% "good" or "very good"). Ratings of park **facilities** center around **fair** for the second year.
- Frequent (monthly or more) visitors to **Golden Gate Park** rate park grounds **more** favorably than infrequent users.
- White respondents report more frequent visits to Golden Gate Park, and rate park grounds more favorably, than African-Americans and Asian-Americans.
- Longer-term residents of San Francisco appear to be less satisfied with parks.
- As would be expected, residents of the **West** side of the City were found to visit Golden Gate Park most often, followed by Central residents.
- Respondents under 60 years old report more visits to Golden Gate Park and other parks than those 60 and older.
- Respondents with more education tend to visit parks more and rate grounds better than those with less education.
- Unlike 1996, there is no significant association between gender and number of park visits in 1997. Men and women rate daytime park safety similarly, although women feel less safe alone in parks at night. As in 1996, women rate park grounds higher in quality than do men.

Note: Percentages may not total 100%, due to rounding.
* Number of responses to each question, excluding "Have not used" responses to quality questions. ** A lower mean score is more favorable.

Parks and Recreation (continued)

3. In general, how do you rate the City's recreation programs and facilities (such as recreation/ community centers, playgrounds, drama and dance classes, art centers, summer day camps, etc.)?

	VERY GOOD 1	GOOD 2	FAIR 3	POOR 4	VERY POOR 5	NUMBER OF RESPONSES*	MEAN SCORE**
♦ convenience (location, hours)	10%	46%	36%	7%	2%	563	2.44
♦ cost	11%	34%	44%	8%	3%	617	2.58
♦ quality of programs	8%	43%	39%	8%	3%	604	2.53

Did anyone in your household take part in a City recreation activity in the past year?
Percentage of respondents reporting someone had participated in a recreation activity

AGE 12 & UNDER	AGE 13 TO 18	AGE 19 TO 54	AGE 55 & OVER
8%	4%	14%	6%

- In 1997 as in 1996, about half of the survey respondents indicate that they have not used City recreation programs.
- Convenience, cost, and quality of City recreation programs again average a **good to fair** rating in 1997. About half of the quality ratings are "good" or "very good"; ratings are slightly more positive for convenience and slightly less so for cost.
- Households in the Southeast report **more children** (age 18 and under) **participating in recreation activities**. (This section of the city has the most children.) Reported participation in recreation activities by adults does not differ significantly by area of the city.

Note: Percentages may not total 100%, due to rounding.
* Number of responses to each question, excluding "Have not used" responses to quality questions. ** A lower mean score is more favorable.

Muni

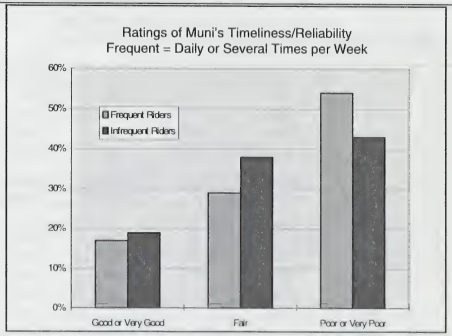
4. In general, how do you rate the quality of the Muni transit system in the following categories?

	VERY GOOD 1	GOOD 2	FAIR 3	POOR 4	VERY POOR 5	NUMBER OF RESPONSES*	MEAN SCORE**
♦ convenience of routes	19%	45%	28%	5%	3%	1064	2.29
♦ timeliness/reliability	2%	16%	34%	27%	20%	1055	3.48
♦ cleanliness	2%	12%	40%	30%	16%	1059	3.45
♦ fares	12%	34%	42%	9%	4%	1054	2.58
♦ safety	4%	25%	40%	21%	11%	1044	3.10
♦ courtesy of drivers	6%	27%	38%	18%	12%	1058	3.03

5. In a typical **month**, how often do you ride Muni?

DAILY	SEVERAL TIMES/WEEK	ONCE OR TWICE/WEEK	SEVERAL TIMES/ MONTH	ONCE OR TWICE/ MONTH	NEVER	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
30%	18%	11%	12%	18%	11%	1104

- 64% of respondents rate **convenience of routes** "good" or "very good," about the same as in 1996.
- Opinions of **timeliness/reliability** are worse in 1997, with a 47% "poor" or "very poor" rating, compared with 42% in 1996. Among frequent Muni riders, 54% choose "poor" or "very poor."
- **Fares** are rated "fair" or better by 88% of respondents, a slight improvement over 1996.
- Ratings of **safety** and driver **courtesy** have improved to an average of "fair" in 1997; **cleanliness** ratings have also improved, but 46% still rate it "poor" or "very poor."
- **Safety** is still rated worst by residents of the **Southeast region** of the city. **Latino** respondents rate safety significantly worse than white and Asian-American respondents.
- **North** and **Central** residents report **more frequent Muni use** than West and Southeast residents.



Note: Percentages may not total 100%, due to rounding.
* Number of responses to each question, excluding "Have not used" responses to quality questions. ** A lower mean score is more favorable.

Libraries

6. In general, how do you rate the quality of the City's libraries in the following categories?

	VERY GOOD 1	GOOD 2	FAIR 3	POOR 4	VERY POOR 5	NUMBER OF RESPONSES*	MEAN SCORE**
♦ collections of books, tapes, etc.	16%	49%	27%	7%	1%	816	2.28
♦ convenience of hours	14%	48%	28%	8%	2%	821	2.37
♦ assistance from library staff	21%	51%	22%	5%	1%	788	2.13
♦ computer resources	14%	46%	30%	7%	2%	643	2.36
♦ programs and activities for children	18%	47%	28%	6%	2%	454	2.28

7. In the past **year**, how often did you:

	AT LEAST ONCE/WEEK	AT LEAST ONCE/MONTH	SEVERAL TIMES/YEAR	ONCE OR TWICE/YEAR	NEVER	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
♦ visit the City's Main library?	3%	13%	21%	22%	41%	1163
♦ visit branch libraries?	7%	18%	21%	16%	38%	1143
♦ contact a City library by telephone?	1%	4%	9%	18%	68%	1129
♦ contact a City library by computer?	1%	2%	3%	6%	88%	1131

- **Staff assistance** continues to receive high marks in 1997 (72% "good" or "very good"). Ratings of other library services have improved from last year, and now range from 60% to 65% "good" or "very good."
- Respondents' **frequency of visits** has not changed much, although the Main library and branches report increased attendance since the new Main opened in April 1996. There is a decline in the number of respondents reporting that they never visited the Main library in the past year, from 51% to 41%. It is possible that visits increased within categories; e.g., perhaps more "at least once a week" patrons visit several times a week.
- Respondents with four or more years of **college** rate the quality of library collections less favorably than other respondents.
- Central residents report more frequent visits to the **Main Library**, and West residents report the most use of **branches**, followed by Southeast, North and Central residents. These findings are consistent with the 1996 survey.
- Most ratings of library services do not vary significantly by **area of residence**. However, West residents rate staff assistance better than do Central residents. (This may reflect more use of branch libraries, rather than difference in staff around the City.)
- Frequent (at least once/week) users of **branch** libraries rate **library staff** and **convenience of hours** higher than do infrequent visitors.

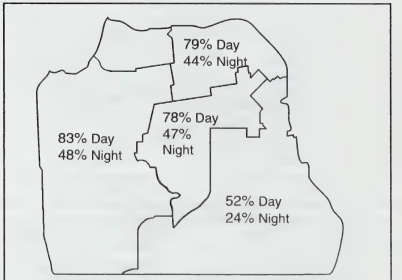
Note: Percentages may not total 100%, due to rounding.
* Number of responses to each question, excluding "Have not used" responses to quality questions. ** A lower mean score is more favorable.

Public Safety

8. How safe would you feel walking alone:

	VERY SAFE 1	SAFE 2	NEITHER SAFE NOR UNSAFE 3	UNSAFE 4	VERY UNSAFE 5	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	MEAN SCORE*
during the day							
♦ in your neighborhood?	31%	42%	18%	6%	3%	1175	2.06
♦ in the park closest to you?	17%	41%	26%	12%	5%	1149	2.46
♦ downtown?	14%	41%	30%	11%	4%	1152	2.50
at night							
♦ in your neighborhood?	8%	32%	27%	20%	12%	1171	2.95
♦ in the park closest to you?	2%	11%	24%	36%	27%	1155	3.76
♦ downtown?	2%	13%	33%	32%	20%	1135	3.56
How safe do you feel crossing the street?	6%	36%	32%	18%	7%	1157	2.84

- In every situation described above, respondents report feeling **safer** in 1997 than in 1996. Mean scores for these questions improved (i.e., decreased) by about 6%. However, people still report feeling **unsafe at night**, especially **in parks**.
- As in 1996, **Southeast** residents report feeling significantly less safe than other regions of the city in their neighborhoods and in nearby parks, both day and night. **Southeast** residents also feel less safe crossing the streets than those in the Central and West.
- **Women** feel less safe than men at night. Most people, both men and women, feel unsafe at night downtown or in the park.
- **African-American, Latino and Asian respondents** report feeling less safe than white respondents in each daytime situation. African-American and Asian respondents also report feeling less safe than whites in their neighborhoods at night, while Latino respondents report feeling less safe downtown at night. African-Americans feel less safe than white respondents crossing the street. These findings are similar to those in 1996.
- **Older residents** (aged 60 and older) in general report feeling **less safe** than younger residents.



Percentage of Respondents who would feel Safe or Very Safe Walking Alone in their Neighborhood

Note: Percentages may not total 100%, due to rounding.
* A lower mean score is more favorable.

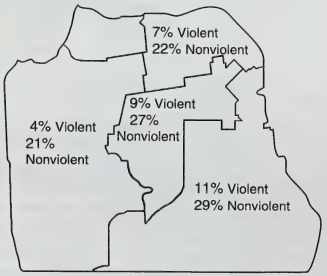
Public Safety (continued)

9. Have you been a victim of a crime during the last twelve months, and if so, was it reported to police? (If more than once, please answer for *the last time.*)

- ♦ Violent crime (mugging, rape, assault, battering, etc.)
- ♦ Nonviolent crime (burglary, car theft, etc.)

WAS VICTIM OF CRIME, REPORTED TO POLICE	WAS VICTIM OF CRIME, DID NOT REPORT	WAS VICTIM OF CRIME, TOTAL	WAS NOT VICTIM OF CRIME	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
4%	3%	7%	93%	1197
13%	12%	25%	75%	1197

- There was no significant difference between 1996 and 1997 respondents being victims of crime. Approximately **half of crime victims did not report the incident to the police**, for both violent and nonviolent crimes.
- Respondents **under 60 years of age** were **victims of violent and nonviolent crime** more often than residents **aged 60 and older**.
- Unlike 1996, this year there were no measurable differences among **ethnic groups** with regard to **being victims of violent crime**.
- Men reported being victims of both violent and nonviolent crime more often than women.
- Gay and lesbian respondents indicate more experience of nonviolent crime than bisexuals and heterosexuals, even when accounting for area of residence.
- Residents from the Southeast report that they were victims of violent crime more often than residents in the West.



Percentage of Respondents who Were Crime Victims in the 12 Months Prior to the Survey

Note: Percentages may not total 100%, due to rounding.

Health

10. Are you currently covered by a health insurance plan?

YES	NO	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
85%	15%	1168

- If YES, who pays for the costs of the insurance premium?

I DO	EMPLOYER	ME/ EMPLOYER	MEDI-CAL OR MEDICARE	OTHER	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
21%	28%	26%	16%	9%	994

- If NO, why don't you have insurance?

LOST JOB	EMPLOYER DROPPED	NOT ELIG (ILLNESS)	TOO EXPENSIVE	DON'T NEED IT	OTHER	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
15%	2%	3%	62%	6%	12%	164

11. Over the past twelve months, have you received health care services from a San Francisco Health Department Clinic (including S.F. General, Laguna Honda Hospital, and/or neighborhood clinics)?

	YES	NO	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
All Resps.	17%	83%	1157
Insured	14%	86%	973
Uninsured	37%	63%	164

- The proportion of respondents with **health insurance** varies by employment status, education, age, ethnicity and household size. Some of these variations are shown in the tables at right.
- 90% of the respondents who **work 35 or more hours per week** have health insurance. Of those who work 15 to 34 hours/week, only 72% are insured.
- Others who lack insurance include renters (21% uninsured) and households of five or more persons (24% uninsured).
- The most common reason given for lack of insurance is **expense** (62%). Many of those who gave an "other" reason included expense in their explanations.
- 17% of respondents had **visited a City clinic** in the past twelve months. 37% of uninsured respondents had used a City clinic.

% Insured by Education Level:	
Less than High School	68%
High School	80%
Less than 4 yrs College	85%
College or Postgraduate	90%

% Insured by Age:	
Under 30	77%
30 to 59	85%
60 and Over	92%

% Insured by Ethnicity:	
African-American*	80%
Asian-American	76%
Latino/Hispanic	78%
White	92%

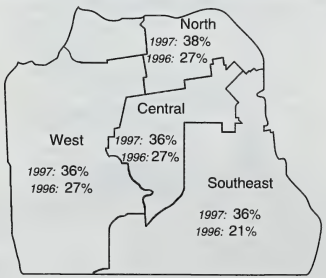
Note: Percentages may not total 100%, due to rounding. * The percentage insured for African-Americans cannot be distinguished statistically from those of other ethnic groups in this sample; the number of African-Americans in the sample is relatively small (n = 61).

General

12. Overall, how good a job do you think local government is doing at providing services?

	VERY GOOD 1	GOOD 2	FAIR 3	POOR 4	VERY POOR 5	NUMBER OF RESPONSES*	MEAN SCORE**
1997 Survey	5%	32%	52%	9%	3%	1197	2.75
1996 Survey	2%	23%	56%	14%	5%	1738	2.97

- In both years, the most common response to this question is "fair." However, **"good" and "very good" responses have increased**, while "poor" and "very poor" responses have decreased.
- People aged **60 and older** are more favorable of city government than respondents younger than 60.
- Unlike 1996, there is **no significant difference** on how residents rate City services based on **region**. Ratings by region are shown on the map at right.
- Homeowners rank city services slightly less favorably than do renters.
- Residents who have **lived in SF** from **10-19 years rank services lower than** residents that have lived in SF from **1-4 years**.



Percentage of Respondents Rating Local Government's Overall Performance Good or Very Good

Note: Percentages may not total 100%, due to rounding.
* Number of responses to each question, excluding "Have not used" responses to quality questions. ** A lower mean score is more favorable.

Demographic Information

Where available, 1990 Census information for the San Francisco population is included for comparison.

A) How many people live in your household?

	1 PERSON	2 PEOPLE	3 PEOPLE	4 PEOPLE	5 PEOPLE	6 OR MORE	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
1997 Survey	22%	37%	16%	14%	6%	6%	1164
1996 Survey	25%	38%	15%	12%	6%	5%	1771
1990 Census	39%	30%	13%	9%	4%	5%	

- People who live alone continue to be underrepresented in the survey sample in 1997.
- More survey respondents in the North and Central sections of the City live in small households than in the West and Southeast.

B) How long have you lived in San Francisco?

	LESS THAN 1 YEAR	1 TO 4 YEARS	5 TO 9 YEARS	10 TO 19 YEARS	OVER 19 YEARS	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
1997 Survey	3%	15%	19%	20%	44%	1183
1996 Survey	1%	12%	13%	22%	51%	1812
1997 Combined	18%			82%		
1990 Census	27%			73%		

- The survey sample includes a higher than expected proportion of people who have been in San Francisco five years or longer. However, the gap between the survey sample and the Census is smaller in 1997 than in 1996.
- Respondents in the North and Central sections of the City have been in San Francisco less time on average than those in the Southeast and West.
- Mailing lists inevitably omit a lot of people who have been in the City less than one year.

Note: Percentages may not total 100%, due to rounding.

Demographic Information (continued)

C) Do you own or rent your home?

	OWN	RENT	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
1997 Survey *(adult individuals)*	42%	58%	1179
1996 Survey *(adult individuals)*	52%	48%	1799
1990 Census *(households)*	35%	65%	

- The survey sample has a higher proportion of renters in 1997 than in 1996, approaching the proportion of renter households in the census.
- Survey respondents in the North and Central sections of the City include more renters than in the West and Southeast.
- Some of the difference between the percentage of renters in the survey sample and that in the Census results from the difference in household size. Renters tend to have fewer individuals per household than homeowners, so the percentage of renter individuals is smaller than the percentage of renter households. (Census data were not available for individuals.)

D) What is your sex?

	FEMALE	MALE	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
1997 Survey	54%	46%	1178
1996 Survey	48%	52%	1803
1990 Census	50%	50%	

E) What is your age?

	18 TO 19	20 TO 29	30 TO 44	45 TO 59	60 TO 74	OVER 74	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
1997 Survey	1%	16%	32%	25%	17%	9%	1182
1996 Survey	0%	12%	33%	27%	18%	10%	1805
1990 Census	3%	23%	34%	17%	15%	8%	

- Survey respondents are older on average than the San Francisco population. People under 30 are especially underrepresented. Although younger residents may have been less willing to respond to the survey, it is also likely that the mailing list had fewer young people because their addresses change more frequently.
- Survey respondents in the Central and North sections are the youngest, on average.

Note: Percentages may not total 100%, due to rounding.

Demographic Information (continued)

F) Which of these comes closest to describing your sexual orientation?

	BISEXUAL	GAY/LESBIAN	HETEROSEXUAL/ STRAIGHT	OTHER	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
1997 Survey	5%	9%	82%	4%	1094
1996 Survey	5%	13%	77%	5%	1660

- The Central area has the highest proportion of gay and lesbian respondents, at 24%.
- Some respondents may not have been familiar with the terms used in this question.

G) Which of these comes closest to describing your ethnic background?

	AFRICAN-AMER./BLACK	ASIAN OR PACIFIC ISL.	LATINO/ HISPANIC	NATIVE AMER./INDIAN	WHITE/ CAUCASIAN	MIXED OR OTHER	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
1997 Survey	5%	30%	7%	<1%	50%	7%	1160
1996 Survey	5%	25%	6%	<1%	56%	7%	1775
1990 Census	10%	27%	13%*	<1%	57%	5%	

* Census figures are not exactly comparable to survey proportions, because the Census asks for Hispanic Origin as a separate question from race (white, black, etc.). For this reason, the Census numbers above total 100% only when the Latino/Hispanic category is excluded. Nonetheless, these numbers indicate that African-American and Latino San Franciscans are **underrepresented** in the survey sample.

Relative to other areas of the City,

- the Southeast has a higher proportion of African-American and Latino respondents;
- the West has a higher proportion of Asian respondents; and
- the Central area has a higher proportion of white respondents.

Note: Percentages may not total 100%, due to rounding.

Demographic Information (continued)

H) What is the highest level of education you have completed?

	LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL	LESS THAN 4 YRS COLLEGE	COLLEGE OR POSTGRADUATE	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
1997 Survey	7%	18%	28%	48%	1165
1996 Survey	5%	14%	25%	57%	1785
1990 Census	22%	19%	27%	33%	

- The survey sample includes a higher proportion of college graduates than the population. However, the 1997 sample is closer to the Census than the 1996 sample.

I) How many hours a week do you work in paid employment?

	NONE	1 TO 14	15 TO 34	35 OR MORE	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
1997 Survey	29%	3%	12%	56%	1061
1990 Census*	30%	3%	12%	55%	

* Census data are the usual weekly hours worked by those who worked at all in 1989.

- As one would expect, employment status varies by age: most people over 60 are not employed, while most of those between ages 20 and 59 work 35 or more hours per week.
- Respondents under 30 include relatively more part-time workers than other age groups.

Note: Percentages may not total 100%, due to rounding.

Survey Process and Methodology

A. Purpose of the Survey

The 1997 Citizen Survey is part of an ongoing effort to measure and improve the performance of City government in San Francisco. Increasingly, government auditor-controllers are reporting on service efforts and accomplishments as well as financial performance. Everyone needs information on the extent to which services are having their desired results; that is, the *outcomes* of the City's efforts. One of the most direct ways to measure outcomes is to ask the users of City services.

This is San Francisco's second annual Citizen Survey. A primary purpose of last year's survey was to set a baseline. In 1997, we ask many of the same questions, in order to measure changes in people's experience and perceptions of City government services. These comparisons will become more useful as we compile several years of data, and changes in citizen satisfaction over time will help determine the success of policy and budget initiatives.

In interpreting the results of the survey, it is worth noting that many factors influence the ratings of a particular service, including different expectations for different types of services. Similar surveys in other areas have found that certain services are consistently rated more highly than others. For example, fire departments and libraries get higher ratings than transit in other cities, as well as in San Francisco.

B. Which Services? What kinds of Questions?

The survey covers parks, recreation programs, Muni, libraries, public safety, and health insurance, as well as a question about City services overall. Survey questions were developed to meet several requirements, including:

(1) the services or issues in question are of concern to a large number of San Franciscans;
(2) services are visible to or used by enough people that a large number of survey respondents can rate them;
(3) survey questions provide information that is not more easily obtained from another source; and
(4) all questions fit on a one-piece mailer and do not take so long to complete as to discourage responses.

The omission of a service area does not reflect a lack of importance to the City, but rather a lack of space or an assessment that a citywide survey is not the best way to measure performance in that area. For example, we omitted questions about public schools and the fire department from the 1997 survey, after learning in the 1996 survey that only a small proportion of our sample had sufficient experience to give an opinion of these services.

C. Survey Method and Response Rate

In February 1997, the Controller's office sent questionnaires to 5,000 randomly selected San Franciscans, with a letter explaining the purpose of the survey and how to complete it. Reminder postcards and a second copy of the survey followed after a few weeks. The pool of potential respondents was reduced to 4,287 by surveys that were undeliverable because of incorrect or out-of-date addresses. By mid-March (our cutoff point to start analyzing results), we had received 1,197 responses, for a response rate of 28%.

We numbered each survey in order to track responses, but asked respondents to remove the page with their name and address. Individual responses have been kept confidential. The numbering system allowed us to tailor our follow-up mailings to nonrespondents only, and to group responses by zip code.

Before mailing the survey, we sent out a postcard in English, Spanish and Chinese with telephone numbers to call for a survey in Chinese or Spanish. Demand for the Chinese and Spanish language surveys was small.

D. Analysis by Neighborhood

We grouped City zip codes into four large areas.[1] They encompass the following neighborhoods:

Central: 94102, 94103, 94114, 94117, 94131 (Haight, Castro, Noe Valley, Civic Center, South of Market, Diamond Heights, Glen Park, Twin Peaks, Buena Vista, Fillmore, Glen Canyon Park).

North: 94104, 94105, 94108, 94109, 94111, 94115, 94123, 94133 (North Beach, Chinatown, Marina, Pacific Heights, Western Addition, Russian Hill, Nob Hill, Telegraph Hill, Financial District, Cow Hollow).

Southeast: 94107, 94110, 94112, 94124, 94134 (Mission, Potrero Hill, Bayview, Hunters Point, Excelsior, Ingleside, Visitacion Valley, Bernal Heights, Portola, Ocean View).

West: 94116, 94118, 94121, 94122, 94127, 94132 (Richmond, Sunset, Stonestown, Parkside, Forest Hill, Seacliff, Park Merced, Presidio Heights, Laurel Heights, West Portal, St. Francis Wood, Miraloma Park).

A small number of responses are excluded from the neighborhood analysis, from respondents who deleted tracking numbers from their surveys, and thus could not be associated with a zip code. Appendix A includes a map of geographic areas and breakdown of the sample by large area and zip code.

[1] Using large areas allowed for sample sizes large enough to determine some differences among groups. Boundaries were chosen to provide demographic as well as geographic similarity. There was no grouping scheme that made sense for all questions; for example, the Mission zip code of 94110 is included in the Southeast group, but it is more like the Central group for the purposes of Muni routes. Similarly, while the Haight area zip code 94117 is included in the Central group, it is more like the West group in terms of visits to Golden Gate Park.

E. How Well do the Survey Respondents Represent San Franciscans?

A comparison of demographic characteristics reported by survey respondents with data from the 1990 census and subsequent estimates reveals that the survey respondents differ from the San Francisco population. On average, the survey respondents are older, more educated, live in larger households, and have been in San Francisco longer than the population as a whole. African-American and Latino residents of San Francisco are underrepresented in the sample.

However, our 1997 sample was more representative of the San Francisco population than the 1996 sample. We will continue to try to solicit an even more representative group of respondents. In particular, the proportion of renters is higher in 1997, and the gaps in age, education and time in San Francisco have been reduced.

Some of the distortion in our sample is a result of mailing list composition. Another source is nonresponse bias, which occurs when the group of survey respondents differs in demographic characteristics, and opinions, from the group of those who do not respond. The difference in responses between the first and second mailings of the survey suggests that additional efforts bring in more of the people who are underrepresented in the sample.

F. Sample Source

The survey respondents' names and addresses came from two sources: State Department of Motor Vehicles records and voter registrations. These files were merged, and duplicate records were eliminated where possible.

We used a stratified sampling method, selecting a specified number of names from each zip code, in order to reflect that zip code's proportion of the adult population of the City, and to compensate for low response rates in some zip codes in last year's survey.

G. Sampling Error

With a total sample size of 1197, the estimated sampling error is about ±3% at the 95% confidence level. This means that we are 95% confident that all adult San Francisco residents would produce responses to each survey question within three percentage points of the results obtained from this sample. For example, 50% of survey respondents rated park grounds as "good"; we are 95% sure that if we asked all San Francisco residents, we would get a response between 47% and 53% for this same item.

Sampling errors are larger than ±3% for sample subgroups, such as residents of the Central part of the City, or for questions that received fewer responses, such as ratings of recreation programs.

This measurable error, which results from using a sample to represent a whole population, does not account for other sources of error which are more difficult to measure, such as nonresponse bias.

Detail of responses by geographic area, with maximum sampling error for each group and question, is available upon request.

H. Acknowledgments

Invaluable research assistance for this report was provided by Pete Arambula, with guidance from Terra Schehr, of the Public Research Institute at San Francisco State University. All of the report's conclusions, and any weaknesses, are the responsibility of the Controller's office.

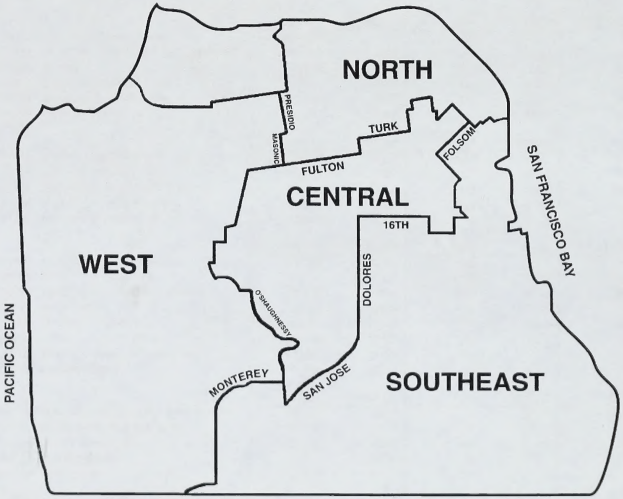
We are indebted to the City of Portland, particularly Richard Tracy, Audits Director, and Ellen Jean, Auditor, who shared information and samples of Portland's Citizen Survey and performance measures report, from which we have borrowed heavily.

We extend thanks also to David German, Linda Zane and other staff of the City's Reproduction and Mail Services for assistance with the design, printing and mailing of the survey questionnaire, as well as the printing of this report.

Results of the 1997 Citizen Survey

Appendix A: Map and List of Geographic Areas

Map of Geographic Areas for Survey Analysis



Geographic Areas for Survey Analysis

Area	Zip Code	Neighborhoods	SF Adult Population (1)		Survey Sample 1996 (2)		Survey Sample 1997 (2)	
Central	94102	Civic Center	23,662	3.9%	71	4.0%	25	2.1%
	94103	South of Market	15,057	2.5%	43	2.4%	30	2.5%
	94114	Castro, Noe Valley	27,707	4.6%	100	5.6%	72	6.1%
	94117	Haight-Ashbury, Buena Vista	33,475	5.5%	110	6.1%	62	5.2%
	94131	Diamond Hts, Glen Park, Twin Peaks	25,895	4.3%	91	5.1%	49	4.1%
			125,796	20.7%	415	23.1%	238	20.1%
North	94104	Financial District	693	0.1%	2	0.1%	1	0.1%
	94105	Financial District South of Market	2,467	0.4%	1	0.1%	5	0.4%
	94108	Chinatown, Union Square	12,835	2.1%	23	1.3%	32	2.7%
	94109	Russian Hill, Nob Hill	45,167	7.4%	121	6.7%	88	7.4%
	94111	Embarcadero	3,077	0.5%	11	0.6%	6	0.5%
	94115	Pacific Heights, Western Addition	25,526	4.2%	83	4.6%	38	3.2%
	94123	Marina, Cow Hollow	21,056	3.5%	52	2.9%	49	4.1%
	94133	Telegraph Hill, North Beach	23,298	3.8%	48	2.7%	67	5.7%
			134,119	22.0%	341	19.0%	286	24.2%
Southeast	94107	Potrero Hill, South of Market	10,409	1.7%	37	2.1%	11	0.9%
	94110	Mission, Bernal Heights	56,691	9.3%	144	8.0%	109	9.2%
	94112	Excelsior, Ingleside, Ocean View	51,584	8.5%	146	8.1%	86	7.3%
	94124	Bayview, Hunters Point	20,148	3.3%	44	2.4%	38	3.2%
	94134	Portola, Visitacion Valley	26,083	4.3%	78	4.3%	50	4.2%
			164,915	27.1%	449	25.0%	294	24.8%
West	94116	Parkside, Forest Hill	32,971	5.4%	117	6.5%	62	5.2%
	94118	Laurel Heights, Richmond	32,398	5.3%	112	6.2%	63	5.3%
	94121	Richmond, Seacliff	34,240	5.6%	114	6.3%	68	5.7%
	94122	Sunset	43,978	7.2%	126	7.0%	100	8.4%
	94127	W. Portal, Miraloma Pk., St. Francis Wd	14,198	2.3%	54	3.0%	33	2.8%
	94132	Stonestown, Park Merced	19,489	3.2%	62	3.5%	39	3.3%
			177,274	29.1%	585	32.6%	365	30.8%
Other	94129	Presidio	3,213	0.5%	1	0.1%	1	0.1%
	94130	Treasure Island	2,985	0.5%	3	0.2%	-	0.0%
	94142, 94147				2	0.1%	-	0.0%
			6,198	1.0%	6	0.3%	1	0.1%
	Total		608,302	100.0%	1,796	100.0%	1,184	100.0%

(1) Sourcebook of Zip Code Demographics, 1996 ed.

(2) Excluding 50 surveys in 1996 and 13 surveys in 1997 for which zip codes are not known.